

REMARKS

According to the invention of claims 3 and 37 as amended a client computer transmits to a server computer an order acceptance request containing a plurality of terms or conditions of a proposed offer for a purchase. The order acceptance request includes a discrete message that includes a plurality of modular elements, one of which is a coupon, individually protected by cryptographic security codes. The server computer processes the order acceptance request, including authentication of the cryptographic security codes and examination of the individually modular elements, and transmits to the client computer an order acceptance response that includes a discrete message, transmitted during a negotiation phase of a transaction, that includes a plurality of individually protected modular elements.

The claims have been amended to specifically require one of the individually protected modular elements to be a coupon (as formerly recited in dependent claims 11 and 38). As is discussed in the application as filed at page 9, lines 20-32, the individual protection of a coupon (or gift certificate, which is a form of coupon) can allow the client computer and the server computer to efficiently store and forward the coupon together with its protection codes. For example, the coupon, individually protected by a protection code, may have been obtained from a third party:

The integrity of modular elements of order acceptance request 16 and order acceptance response 18 can be separately protected by protection codes embedded within the protected modular element. The protection codes can be implemented using digital signatures or message authentication codes or other well-known cryptographic security techniques. The embedding of these codes within modules of the messages enables client computer 12 and server 14 to efficiently store and forward the modular elements together with their protection codes. For example, an order acceptance request 16 may contain a digital coupon, protected by a protection code, that client computer 12 has obtained from a third party.

The examiner rejected claims 11 and 38 (now incorporated into claims 3 and 37) as being obvious over Sirbu in view of Mital and further in view of Storey.

As was discussed in applicant's previous response, Sirbu fails to describe or suggest the claimed combination of a discrete order acceptance request message and a discrete order acceptance response message each of which includes individually protected modular elements. For this feature, the Examiner relies on Mital, which describes a secure electronic message that contains one or more transaction packets and an audit packet. The (1) goods and service order, (2) payment instructions, and (3) audit packet are encrypted into different encryption formats (column 3, lines 29-32). This allows a merchant to decrypt the goods and service order, a bank to decrypt the payment instructions, and an electronic commerce service to decrypt the audit packet while maintaining confidentiality of all of the information.

While Mital does recognize a specific advantage in protecting goods and service order, payment instructions, and audit packet with different encryption formats, Mital simply does not recognize that this principle should be extended to individually protect a coupon. The Examiner relies on Storey for its disclosure of digital coupons, but Storey is silent on individual protection of modular elements.

Applicant submits that if Sirbu were to be modified in accordance with Mital and Storey as suggested by the Examiner, the result would be a system where a message includes a coupon and has (1) a goods and service order, (2) payment instructions, and (3) an audit packet encrypted with different formats. This is not applicant's invention. It is only through hindsight that it can be concluded that the coupon should be individually protected as a fourth modular element (as opposed to being encrypted together with the goods and service order, for example), a hindsight gleaned only from applicant's disclosure.

Attached is a marked-up version of the changes being made by the current amendment.

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Applicant asks that all claims be allowed. Enclosed is a \$110 check for the Petition for Extension of Time fee. Please apply any other charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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**Version with markings to show changes made**

**In the claims:**

Claims 11 and 38 have been cancelled.

Claims 3, 12-14, 19, 20, 22, 23, 37, 39-41, 46, 47, 49, and 50 have been amended as follows:

3. (Twice amended) An electronic commerce system, comprising:

a client computer; and  
a server computer;

the client computer and the server computer being interconnected by a public packet switched communications network;

the client computer being programmed to transmit to the server computer an order acceptance request comprising a plurality of terms or conditions of a proposed offer for a purchase, the order acceptance request comprising a discrete message that includes a plurality of modular elements individually protected by cryptographic security codes, at least one of the modular elements individually protected by a cryptographic security code being a coupon;

the server computer being programmed to process the order acceptance request based on pre-programmed criteria, including authentication of the cryptographic security codes and examination of the modular elements of the discrete message individually protected by the cryptographic security codes, and, based on the processing of the order acceptance request, to transmit to the client computer an order acceptance response based on the pre-programmed criteria, the order acceptance response comprising a discrete message transmitted during a negotiation phase of a transaction that includes a plurality of modular elements individually protected by cryptographic security codes.

12. (Amended) The electronic commerce system of claim [11] 3 wherein the client computer is programmed to receive the digital coupon, protected by a cryptographic security code, from another computer.

13. (Amended) The electronic commerce system of claim [11] 3 wherein the digital coupon is configured to be used by any coupon holder that possesses the digital coupon, and wherein the server computer is programmed to accept the digital coupon without regard to identity of the coupon holder.

14. (Amended) The electronic commerce system of claim [11] 3 wherein the server computer is programmed to determine whether a coupon holder is authorized to use the digital coupon and to accept the digital coupon only if the coupon holder is authorized to use the digital coupon.

19. (Amended) The electronic commerce system of claim [11] 3 wherein the digital coupon contains a serial number to ensure that the digital coupon is used only once and the server computer is programmed to determine whether the digital coupon has been used previously and to accept the digital coupon only if it has not been used previously.

20. (Amended) The electronic commerce system of claim [11] 3 wherein the server computer is programmed to set at least one term of the order acceptance response based on whether the digital coupon is present in the order acceptance request.

22. (Amended) The electronic commerce system of claim [11] 3 wherein the server computer is programmed to set at least one term of the order acceptance response based on whether the digital coupon in the order acceptance request is a particular type of digital coupon.

23. (Amended) The electronic commerce system of claim [11] 3 wherein the digital coupon is a gift certificate.

37. (Twice amended) A method of processing order acceptance requests in an electronic commerce system, comprising a client computer and a server computer interconnected by a public packet switched communications network, the method comprising;

receiving at the server computer an order acceptance request transmitted by the client computer comprising a plurality of terms or conditions of a proposed offer for a purchase, the order acceptance request comprising a discrete message that includes a plurality of modular elements individually protected by cryptographic security codes, at least one of the modular elements individually protected by a cryptographic security code being a digital coupon;

processing the order acceptance request based on pre-programmed criteria, including authentication of the cryptographic security codes and examination of the modular elements of the discrete message individually protected by the cryptographic security codes; and

based on the processing of the order acceptance request, transmitting to the client computer an order acceptance response based on the pre-programmed criteria, the order acceptance response comprising a discrete message transmitted during a negotiation phase of a transaction that includes a plurality of modular elements individually protected by cryptographic security codes.

39. (Amended) The method of claim [38] 37 wherein the client computer receives the digital coupon, protected by a cryptographic security code, from another computer.

40. (Amended) The method of claim [38] 37 wherein the digital coupon is configured to be used by any coupon holder that possesses the digital coupon, the method further comprising accepting the digital coupon at the server computer is programmed without regard to identity of the coupon holder.

41. (Amended) The method of claim [38] 37 further comprising the steps of determining whether a coupon holder is authorized to use the digital coupon and accepting the digital coupon at the server computer only if the coupon holder is authorized to use the digital coupon.

46. (Amended) The method of claim [38] 37 wherein the digital coupon contains a serial number to ensure that the digital coupon is used only once, the method further comprising determining at the server computer whether the digital coupon has been used previously and accepting the digital coupon only if it has not been used previously.

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47. (Amended) The method of claim [38] 37 further comprising setting, at the server computer, at least one term of the order acceptance response based on whether the digital coupon is present in the order acceptance request.

49. (Amended) The method of claim [38] 37 further comprising setting, at the server computer, at least one term of the order acceptance response based on whether the digital coupon in the order acceptance request is a particular type of digital coupon.

50. (Amended) The method of claim [38] 37 wherein the digital coupon is a gift certificate.